

Hard Work Pays Beautiful Dividends for Davis Family

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Ask Ted Davis if there is anything he doesn't like about his Lawrence County farm and he will quickly answer, "Three things: honey locusts, fire ants, and armadillos." Ask what he and his wife Marcy like about their farm and you better be prepared to listen for a long time.

Their 280-acre farm in the Landersville community is a slice of paradise. From the well-manicured entrance to the wildflower gardens and wildlife food plots, it is as scenic and peaceful as any park Alabama has to offer.

When they purchased the land six years ago, it was a jungle. There were some planted pines but the majority of the acreage was grown up in thick vines and underbrush, and wildlife was scarce. Today the farm has an excellent road system planted in fescue, ten wildlife food plots, three stocked ponds, and ample habitat for both game and non-game species.

Other than hiring dozer operators, the Davis family has done all of the work themselves. They are self-

taught in many aspects of land management but credit several people with providing helpful guidance from the beginning such as family friend Don Kimberly, a forester for International Paper; Ron Eakes, wildlife biologist with the Department of Game and Fish; and

Ted and Marcy have experimented with different wildlife foods and have found the most successful ones to be soybeans, peas, turnip greens, autumn olive, and white clover. A large TVA utility easement is planted in fescue to supplement the animals' diets year-round.

Three ponds were created and stocked with cooper-nose bluegill, bass, and a few catfish. These provide for family recreation but also provide a reliable water supply for the wildlife.

Wildlife benefits from retaining brush piles, snags and den trees as shelter and nesting habitat, and whitetail deer are enjoying special feeders and salt licks.

In 1999, Ted and Marcy Davis received statewide recognition

for excellence in forest management when they were certified as TREASURE Forest landowners.

They still get flat tires on tractors from honey locust thorns, and fire ants and armadillos still cause havoc, but they bear those pesky problems with a smile. After all, that's a small price to pay for a true Alabama **TREASURE.**



Hidden Treasure Landowner, Ted Davis (left) with Larry Lee, AFC manager in Lawrence County

Larry Lee, county manager for the Alabama Forestry Commission.

"We didn't see a deer for the first few years," Ted said. "But after we developed food plots and clearings for them, we started seeing deer, turkey, and even a few quail." They have also spotted coyote, owl, red fox, gray fox, bobcat, red squirrel, and many different songbirds.